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IN FOCUS

This issue opens with an article on Venkatamakhin, the father of Melakarta Scheme, followed by a study on the Navavidha Bhakti Kritis of Maharaja Swathi Tirunal. The next article is the first part of a copious treatise on the variations in raga names in Tyagaraja Kritis found in the Telugu Publications before 1930, supported with authentic source. This is followed by articles on the Impact of music on Human psyche and the raga system being the unique contribution of Indian music to the World of music. Among others there is an interesting article on know your Core Competence followed by the usual features of Interviews, Book Review and Reports.

This issue also carries tributes to those eminent maestros and gurus whose passing away during the recent months, has left the Carnatic music world poorer.



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VENKATAMAKHIN

Father of Melakarta Scheme (c. 1635 / 1660 C.E.)

by Garland N. Rajagopalan

The home of Govinda Dikshitar, the great scholar - administrator - musicologist and Minister to the Rulers of Thanjavur, was the chosen Abode of Goddess Saraswati. Venkatamakhin or Venkateswara Dikshitar was one of his seven sons. He underwent musical training under his elder brother, Yajnanarayana Dikshitar and later under Danappachariar, alias Venkata Sarma, in praise of whom he composed the *gitam* 'Gandharva Janatha' (Arabhi raga). He had authored the works *Vārtikābharana*, a commentary on *Mīmamsa* and *Karmanta vārtika*. His brilliant brother, Yajnarayana Dikshitar had authored the work *Sangita Ratnakara*.

Vijayaraghava Bhupala Nayak was the ruler who encouraged Venkatamakhin in his landmark and historic pursuits in musicology. The epochmaking immortal work 'Chaturdandi Prakasika' was written by Venkatamakhin. It had been in circulation in manuscript till it was taken up for print in the 20th century and published in 1934 by the Madras Music Academy. He had also composed twenty-four *ashtapadis* on Lord Tyagaraja, the presiding deity of Tiruvarur.

In the epoch-making work 'Chaturdandi Prakāsika', Venkatamakhin has systematized the structure on a scientific basis classifying the *mēlas* based on

individual swaras of each *rāga*. It is a landmark in the annals of Carnatic Music. It gives a systematic, scientific classification of *mēla* (principal, prime or basic) ragas based on swaras for each. The name of the work means 'Exposition or Illumination of the four channels through which a *rāga* manifests itself.' Out of the ten chapters, the last and a part of the ninth are reportedly missing according to Dr. V. Raghavan. Twelve hundred and odd couplets that are available are in simple, elegant Sanskrit.

The Melakarta or Janaka-Janya Scheme is logical and scientific, rendering the earlier *adhoc* classifications pale into insignificance. Venkatamakhin himself answers anticipated objections and contentions that some *mēlas* were neither in vogue nor were they required and explains Chaturdandi as follows:

- Gita, Alapa, Thāya and Prabandha - the four channels through which the melodic entity of a raga is revealed or realised - according to the 'Sangita Saramrita' of Raja Tulajaji and
- Sthāyi, Arohi, Avarohi and Sanchari - the four modes of singing according to 'Sangita Suryodaya' or Lakshminarayana (16th century) of the Court of Krishna Devaraya, Vijayanagar.

Notwithstanding the categorical assertion of Venkatamakhin of the absolute necessity and relevance of the seventy-two Melas as a comprehensive and complete scheme, views to the contrary have continued such as those of Abraham Pandithar though not with success. But experts are agreed on the magnificence of the work.

"It is to Carnatic music what Panini's Ashtadhyayi is to Sanskrit language."

Several ragas remain obscure or are heard only in demonstrations.

The magnitude of Venkatamakhin's epoch-making work holds up before the composers, musicians, etc., the entire gamut of permutations and computations feasible as alternatives to suit, invoke and answer individual ingenuity, tastes and preferences. He has given a precise framework in the context of the ever-growing enormity of the number of janya ragas. If more and more ragas are brought out to this day, it should be admitted that the *Melakarta Chakra* and the *Katapayadi* have helped the task easier. Venkatamakhin asserts that the number is 72, neither more nor less - 36 suddha and 36 prati madhyamas. The grouping and codification of ragas in the *Prakasika* aided by lakshana gitas may look simple but only the genius of Venkatamakhin did it.

Father Govinda Dikshitar and his sons including Venkatamakhin were erudite

scholars of remarkable wisdom, geniuses in musicology. They have carved out for themselves an eloquent place in the history of Carnatic music, nay the music systems of the world. Venkatamakhin's disciple, Nilakanta Dikshitar was an equally eminent scholar, who had authored the work 'Nilakanta Vijayam' (1638 C.E.). Govinda Dikshitar and Venkatamakhin are to musicology what Ramaswamy Dikshitar and Muthuswamy Dikshitar are for musical compositions or Ramaswami Sivan and Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan are for composition and rendition.

Ramaswamy Dikshitar, later Subbarama Dikshitar and more recently Kotiswara Ayyar and others, have composed songs in all the melakarta ragas. Lavani Venkata Rao composed a ragamalika in Marathi using all the mela ragas, set to music by Maha Vaidyanatha Ayyar, who brought out another in Sanskrit, the '*Mela ragamalika chakram*'. This composition is unmatched and is the longest of its kind. Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi has rendered it in cassette. Venkatamakhin invented raga '*Simhāravam*'. The *melakarta* scheme is an open invitation for the inspired to invent fresh ragas if the genius of the musician has the needed taste and hunger for it. The life and attainments of the eminent Venkatamakhin deserve the highest place in the luminous history of Carnatic music. He was indeed the pioneering, prime codifier of the law of the ragas. The nation is deeply indebted to him and his historic work. □

BHAKTI CULT IN SWATI TIRUNAL KRITIS

by Dr. Bhuvaneswari G.

A world without music is like a garden without flowers. Nada, the quintessence of music is the lifeblood of creation of both animate and inanimate objects seen in the Universe. Music exudes love (Bhakti), imparts peace, grants solace to listeners and transforms the lay man to the path of philosophy and leads him to Supreme Bliss. It is beyond language. It transcends caste, creed, colour and religion. Classical Indian Music embraces love and bhakti in its purest form. The lives of our ancient seers, musicians of yonder years, vaggeyakaras and the great composers of the last century bring out clearly that Bhakti was the fountain head of their life, bestowing on them supernatural powers, which they used in their service to humanity. Thirujnana Sambandar, Andal, Narayana Thirtha of the pre-Trinity age, the great Trinity, Swathi Tirunal and the number of composers of the Post Trinity period are examples who represented the great galaxy of the musical world, who have experienced the ultimate reality through their Bhakti, blended with music of the purest hue. They can be called as God - sent messengers who remained as the cultural Ambassadors spreading the message of love through their compositions of sweet music, creating a heaven on earth.

The period 1750 - 1850 (100 years) is the golden era in the history of world music. It was during this time that the great musical geniuses contributed a rich legacy to the growth and development of music all over the world. In South India, the Trinity -

Thyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshitar and Syama Sastri lived and rendered their invaluable contributions.

In Kerala, there lived the great Royal Musician and Composer Swati Tirunal who made tremendous contribution to the musical repertoire of South India. This was a period when Kathakali and Sopana Sangita were very popular, being patronized by common folk in temples where they were practised. Swati Tirunal was the glowing star of the 19th century after the Trinity, whose contributions in the field of music, dance and literature are immeasurably great. The bulk of Swati Tirunal's compositions are in praise of Lord Padmanabha, his favorite deity, evincing his ardent Bhakti. Among the Parayana Mudrakaras, Swati Tirunal's name stands first. The Family deity, Padmanabha Swami's blessings and the total devotion of Swati Tirunal helped him in creating variegated Mudras.

Swati Tirunal experienced the presence of Lord Padmanabha in all his thoughts and deeds, culminating in the creation of wonderful compositions, identical to the experiences Tyagaraja had with Lord Sri Rama.

Swati Tirunal bestowed equal devotion to the management of the State as a King and yet could contribute immensely to the world of music. He was the pioneer in bringing the Music of Kerala into the main stream of Karnatic Music. He invited musicians from different parts of India to his Court and honoured and encouraged them, thereby

he mastered about 18 languages, which are reflected in his various musical compositions. Swathi Tirunal's Catholicity of outlook in the structure and form of musical composition is highly remarkable. His compositions include simple musical forms - Jatiswaram and Swarajati to heavy Kritis and group Kritis such as Navaratri Kirtis, Navaratnamalika kirtis, Utsava Prabandhas, Padam, Javali and Tiliana. He has also contributed to North Indian Musical forms - Dindi, Abhang, etc., which are unrivalled in their quality. The notable literary contributions of Swati Tirunal are Bhakti Manjari, Padmanabha Satakam, Syanandoorapuri Vamana Prabandham and two Upakhyanams - Kuchelopakhyanam and Ajamilopakhyanam, as also his Navavidha Bhakti Kirtis and Utsava Prabandham reveal his total surrender to God, true to his name "Padmanabha Dasa".

The Navavidha Bhakti Kritis of Swati Tirunal stand unique, compared to his other contributions. The nine forms of Bhakti (form of worship) of Prahlada have been described at length in Srimad Bhagavatam Saptamaskandam. The story goes like this: Despite the sincere and earnest efforts of the preceptors appointed by Hiranya Kasipu to dissuade Prahlada from his devotion to Narayana, Prahlada's unflinching Bhakthi to Lord Vishnu could not be shaken. In fact, it became more intense. On an appointed day, Hiranyakasipu examined his son about his attainment, in the presence of his preceptors. The beloved father placed his son on his lap and asked him in affectionate words to tell him the best lesson he has learnt so far from his teachers. The reply came from Prahlada in the following glorious words:

*"Sravanam Kirtanam Vishno Smaranam Padasevanam
Archanam Vandanam Dasyam Sakhyam Atmanivedanam
Iti pumsarpita vishnau Bhakli scha navalakshana"*

Sravanam, **Kirtanam**, **Smaranam**, **Padasevanam**, **Archanam**, **Vandanam**, **Daasyam**, **Sakhyam** and **Atmanivedanam**. All the Navavidha Bhakti described by Prahlada can be discerned in the nine kirtis of Swati Tirunal.

Sravanam : Listening to the exposition of His Glory. The first one in this group is **BHAVADEEYA KATHA** - Bhairavi raga - Adi tala. In the Pallavi, it is explained that by listening to the stories of Lord, one can cross the cycle of births and deaths. Swati Tirunal has quoted example of sage Vyasa who has narrated the brilliant deeds of the Lord, which has been retold by sage Suka to Pareekshit Maharaja.

Kirtanam: Chanting the hymns of His Glory. In the Pallavi of the Kriti **TAVAKA NAMANI**, Kedaragowla raga, Rupaka tala, it states that chanting God's name is propitious and praiseworthy. Just by uttering His divine name, even the cruel people attain Moksha.

Smaranam: Meditating on God is Smaranam. Thinking of God in every moment of life in thought, deed and action is Smaranam. This Bhakti bhavana is portrayed through the composition - **SATATAM SAMSMARANEEHA** - Nilambari raga, Misrachapu tala. This composition is full of Lord's epithets. Swathi Tirunal is addressing Lord as Sarasaksha (Lord whose eyes are similar to Lotus). Oh Lord of Syanandurapura - I always meditate on You ceaselessly.

Padasevanam : Doing service at His feet. Bharata's paduka worship is an ideal example for Padasevanam. In the Kriti -

PANKAJAKSHA TAVA SEVAM - Todi raga, Rupaka Tala, Swati Tirunal shows how Lord's Paduka has been respected by carrying on head by fanning Chamaram, doing service at his feet with due respect and reverence.

Archanam : Worship of His image is Archanam. Swati Tirunal emphasizes through the following composition that for human beings hands are meant for doing Archana to Lord. The various modes of worship are portrayed through this composition **Aradhanam**, Bilahari raga, Misrachapu tala; I pay my respect to you (with my mind, speech and body), Swati Tirunal describes how Lord has been decorated with Gems, fragrant flowers like jasmine, sacred Tulasi, etc.

Vandanam: Welcoming Him with full dedication. Prostrating before God is Vandanam. Swati Tirunal has composed many kritis with the idea of conveying his Salutations to God. **Vande Deva Deva**, Begada raga, Rupaka tala composition is particularly included in this group conveying salutations at God's feet. Oh! Lord of Gods, I bow and worship your lotus feet. Lord's feet are compared to sacred Ganges.

Dasyam: Attending to Lord as a Servant. Rendering service to Lord and deriving pleasure out of it is another kind of Bhakti marga. This idea is implied in the composition of Swati Tirunal eg. **Paramapurusha nanu** - Ahiri raga, Misrachapu tala. This composition is an ideal one for Dasya bhava. Swati Tirunal says: All my actions whether good or bad, whatever I eat, speak, touch or smell, all that I offer to you as your humble servant.

Sakhyam: feeling friendship. Keeping a

friendly relationship with God is the Sakhya form of Bhakti. Kuchela's relationship with Lord Krishna's an ideal example for this type of Bhakti etc. **"Bhavati vishwasome"** - Mukhari raga, Misra Chapu tala. In this composition, he prays - please make me fully confident by trusting you. Even in the testing period with great miseries and problems. You are the saviour. So make me confident, to believe you as a friend.

Atmanivedanam: Total and complete surrender to HIM. In this Bhakti aspect, there is no difference between Bhakta and God. This is considered Supreme among the Navavidha Bhakti eg. **Deva deva Kalpayami** - Nadanamakriya raga, Rupaka tala - Oh! Lord of heaven, I pay my pranams at your Lotus feet. This composition is full of epithets of Lord Padmanabha. Swati Tirunal prays to Lord to destroy completely the sins of his previous births with His Grace and requests Lord to protect him.

Swati Tirunal is great. His contributions to the music world are greater. His erudition, total involvement in musical pursuits and complete surrender to the deity Padmanabha brought erstwhile Travancore in the forefront of the musical world.

It will not be an exaggeration to call him the Tyagaraja of Travancore as many of his compositions are almost identical to those of Thyagaraja in the inner thoughts backed with Bhakti.

Carnatic music and Bhakti are inseparable. Blessed are those who revel in music with total devotion and absolute abnegation. Swati Tirunal Maharaja is a shining example of bhakti imbibed through songs in praise of God, the Almighty. □

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VARIATIONS IN RAGA NAMES IN TYAGARAJA KRITIS FOUND IN THE TELUGU PUBLICATIONS BEFORE 1930.

by **Radha Sarangapani** Lecturer, Potti Sriramulu Telugu University, Hyderabad.

Saint Sri Tyagaraja was a great music composer and veteran scholar who is recognised for his poetic excellence. He mastered the particular musical form "Kriti" and popularized it in the Carnatic music system. There are many publications relating to the compositions of Thyagaraja in many South Indian Languages and in English.

The earliest work available to us is the "Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangrahamu" written by Sri Vina Ramanuja, which was published in 1859. This work had listed many kritis of Sri Tyagaraja along with notations for 15 kritis. Later many authors T. M. Venkatesa Sastri, Taccur Singaracharyulu brothers, Subbarama Diksitar, Nadamuni Panditar, P. Ramulu Setti, K. V. Srinivasa Ayyangar and others have published Tyagaraja kritis in the Telugu language.

More than 800 Kirtanas are available to us in ragas such as Bindumalini, Jingala, Srimani, Sruti Ranjani, Revagupti, Suddha Seemantini, Kesari, Chittaranjani,

Nadatarangini, Simhavahini, Jujahuli, Vasantavarali, Svaravali, Chandrajyoti, Mayuradhwani, Sarvabhushani, Bahudari, Kolahalam, Vardhani, Vivardhini, Jayantasri, Pratapavarali, Kalakanthi, Phalamanjari, Purna Shadja, Amritavahini, Gopikavasanta, Hidolavasanta, Kokilavarali, Tivrahahini, Balahamsa, Ragapanjaram, Mandari, Vijayasri, Devamritavarshini, Suddhadesi, Malavi, Rupavati, Navarasa Kannada, Rudrapriya and Andolika.

All the above mentioned ragas are seen in Telugu publications brought out before 1930. But the names of some of the ragas varied from one publication to another. I have listed 40 Kritis from Telugu publications. The present article is going to deal with the variations in raga names in Tyagaraja Kritis found in the Telugu publications before 1930.

Every example is accompanied with the purva & present names mentioned in different publications.

For example the Kriti "Entanerchina" Udayaravichandrika (Present name)
 Saraswati Manohari (Earlier name)

Is listed in **Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangraham (1859)** as **Saraswati Manohari**

while in Sri Tyagaraja Charitram (1916)
 Sangita Pradayini (1916)
 Sangitananda Ratnakaram (1917) and
 Sangitamrta Kirtanalulu (1929)

it is listed as
 Udaya Ravichandrika

As for the Kriti "**Entaranitana**" Harikambhoji (*present name*)
Kharaharapriya (*Earlier name*)

The publications Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916) Gandharva Kalpavalli (1929) Sangitananda Ratnakaram (1917) and Sangitaamrita Kirtanalu (1929)	list the raga as Harikambhoji
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While in **Sangitasarvartha Sara Sangrahamu** it is listed as **Kharaharapriya**

The Kriti "**Edari Sancharintu**" Kantamani (*Present name*)
'Sruti ranjani' (*Earlier name*)

is listed in **Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916)** as *Sruti Ranjani* and as *Kantamani* in
Sangitamrta Kirtanalu (1929)

The kriti "**Evarani Nirnayinchirira**" – Devamrita Varshini (*present name*)
Nada Chintamani & Kharaharapriya (*earlier name*)

Is listed in Gayaka Siddhanjanam (1905) Gayaka Lochanam (1962) Gandharva Kalpavalli (1911) and Sangita Kalanidhi (1912)	as Nadachintamani
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while in Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916)	it is listed as <i>Karaharapriya</i>
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In Sangita Swara Prastara Sagaram and Sangitamrta Kirtanalu	the name is listed as <i>Devamrita Varshini</i>
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As for **Evarikai yavatara** – Devamanohari (*present name*)
Apurupam (*earlier name*)

The raga is listed as <i>Apurupam</i> in	Ksetrayya Padamulu (1876) Tyagaraja Kirtanalu (1881) Gayana Gayani Jana Parijatam (1898)
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In other publications such as

Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangraham (1859) Sangitamrta Kirtanalu (1929) Gayaka Siddhanjanam (1905) Gayaka Parijatam (1877) Ganamrtam (1893) and Sri Tyagaraja Hridayam (1922)	it is listed as Devamanohari
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The kriti **Orajupu Juchedi** Kannada Goula (*present name*)
Simharavam (*Earlier name*)

is listed in Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangraham (1859)	as Simharavam
and in Sangita Kalanidhi (1912) Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916) Sangita Pradayini (1916) Sri Tyagaraja Hridayam (1922) Dravida Ganam (Date of publication not known)	as Kannadaa Goula

The kriti **Kaligiunte** Kiravani (*present name*)
Varunapriya (*earlier name*)

Is listed in Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangraham (1859) Sri Tyagaraja Kirtanalu (1881) and Gayaka Lochanam (1902)	as Varunapriya
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While in Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916), Sri Tyagaraja Hridayam (1922) and Sangitamrta Kirtanalu (1929)	it is listed as Kiravani
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As for **Jnanamosagarada** Purvikalyani (*present name*)
Yamuna & Shadvidhamargini (*earlier name(s)*)

The Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangraham (1859), Sri Tyagaraja Kirtanalu (1881) Gayana Gayani Jana Parijatam (1898) and	list it as Yamuna
Is listed in Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916)	as <i>Shadvidhamargini</i>

Chetulara Kharaharapriya (*present name*)
Natabhairavi (*earlier name*)

Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangraham (1859) Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916)	Nata Bhairavi Kharaharapriya
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Teliyaleru Dhenuka (*present name*)
Todi (*earlier name*)

Sangita Swayambodhini (1892) Ganamrtam (1893)	Todi
Gayaka Lochanam (1902) Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916) Sri Tyagaraja Hridayam (1922)	Dhenuka

Dandamubettenura Balahamsa (*present name*)
Purna Chandrika (*earlier name*)

Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangrahamu (1851) Tyagaraja Kirtanalu (1881)	Purna Chandrika
Gayaka Lochanam (1902) Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916) Sangitamrta Kirtanalu (1929)	Balahamsa

Nagumomugalavani Madhyamavati (*present name*)
Punnagavarali (*earlier name*)

Sangita Sarvartha Sarasangrahamu (1859) Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916)	Punnagavarali Madhyamavati
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Nannugannatali Sindhu Kannada (*present name*)
Kesari (*earlier name*)

Sangita Svayambodhini (1892) Ganamrtamu (1893) Gayaka Siddhanjanam (1905) Sangita Kalanidhi (1912)	Sindhu Kannada
Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916) Sangitamrta Kirtanalu (1929)	Kesari

Nannubrova Abhogi (*present name*)
Vira vasanta (*earlier name*)

Sangita Sarvarthasara Sangraham (1859) Gayaka Parijatam (1877) Prathamabhyasa Pustakamu (1905) Gayaka Siddhanjanam (1905) Sangita Vidya Darpanam (1910) Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916) Sangita Pradayini (1916) Sangitamrta Kirtanalu (1929) Tyagaraja Kirtanalu (1881)	Abhogi
Gayana Gayani Jana Parijatam (1898)	Viravasanta

Ninuvina Namadi Navarasa Kannada (*present name*)
Kalinga (*earlier name*)

Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangraham (1859) Tyagaraja Kirtanalu (1881)	Kalinga
Sangita Svayam Bodhini (1892) Ganamrtamu (1893) Gayaka Siddhanjanam (1905) Sangita Kalanidhi (1912) Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916) Sri Tyagaraja Hrdayam (1922) Sangitamrta Kirtanalu (1929)	Navarasa Kannada

Niravadhi Sukha Ravichandrika (*present name*)
Dhira Sankarabharanam (*earlier name*)

Sangita Sarvarthasara Sangraham (1859) Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916) Sangitananda Ratnakaram (1917) Sri Tyagaraja Hrdayam (1922) Sangita Sudhambudhi (1929) Sangitamrta Kirtanalu (1929)	Dhira Sankarabharanam Ravichandrika
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Nenarunchi Malavi (*present name*)
Harikambhoji (*earlier name*)

Sangita Sarvartha Sara Sangraham (1859) Tyagaraja Kirtanalu (1881)	Harikambhoji
Sangita Svayam Bodhini (1892) Gayaka Siddhanjanam (1905) Sangita Pradayini (1916) Sri Tyagaraja Swami Charitram (1916) Sri Tyagaraja Hrdayam (1922) Sangitamrta Kirtanalu (1929)	Malavi

(cont. next issue)

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IMPACT OF MUSIC ON HUMAN PSYCHE

by **Prof. (Dr.) T. Unnikrishnan** Dean, Faculty of Music, Indira Kala Sangit Vishwavidyalaya, Khairagarh, Chhattisgarh



Culture of a society is based on the traditions and customs handed over from generation to generation. Aesthetic culture is the strong regulator of the behavior of people. It is no surprise then, that music, which is very much associated with aesthetic culture, has an impact on human psyche and behaviour.

Ragas and emotions

Various ragas produced by the different swaras result in different emotions. For example while singing the Madhya Sthayi Shadjam, it is produced in the speaking voice in the chest register. The muscular effort to produce this swara is comparatively little as the vocal apparatus is accustomed to it. The swara Sa has a highly peaceful effect on the mind and the body with relaxed facial muscles akin to a yogi during meditation. Next swara Komal Rishabh produces a sorrowful feeling and slightly upsets the mind with a tendency to reach to Sa. Till this note reaches shadja we experience a kind of uneasy feeling in the mind. But when Teevra rishabha is sung it awakens the mind from this state as it has the capacity to wipe out the sleepy feeling and to bring the mind to full consciousness. But again in Komal Gandhar we feel the same kind of uneasiness. In Teevra Gandhar a soft but inquisitive tone as to the cause of the disturbance may be found. When Komal Madhyama is sung the feeling of self-

appreciation and self-confidence are expressed. Teevra Madhyama produces the feeling of misery and pain and thrives for an immediate relief and experiences it in the next swara Pancham. The same stages of emotions of mind can be expressed while singing from Dhaivatham to the Tharasthayi Shadjam.

Shri H.P. Krishna Rao has explained the emotions of the swaras as –

"S and P are tranquil notes

R1 and D1 indicates disturbance

R2 and D2 are perceptions

G1 and N1 indicate disagreeableness

G2 and N1 indicate inquiry

M1 denotes optimism or egoism

M2 denotes degradation"¹

Different rasas can be produced by the combination of swaras. Pairs of swaras having the frequency ratio: 1:2 or 2:3 or 3:4 i.e. a swara and its higher octave, a swara and its panchama, and a swara and its komal madhyama when combined together produce a soothing effect. Similarly, a combination of komal rishabha and komal gandhara, give a feeling of melancholy. The classification of swaras to Vadi, Samvadi, Anuvadi and Vivadi are established based on this theory. Formation
¹Page 23, *The psychology of music*, H.P. Krishna Rao, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi - 1984.

of the swaras with different frequencies contributes the emotional colors of a raga. The *tampura sruthi* also has equal importance, as it is the meter through which the frequency relationships of the swaras are experienced.

Nadayoga

Psychology and Physiology are interlinked. The emotions of mind have bodily accompaniments. Each and every feeling like joy, anger, excitement, fear and sorrow gives different expressions on the face. When the mind is in a state of tranquility the facial expression will be of peace similar to meditation. A singer through the vibrations of sound can experience this state of mind. Sound has a direct influence on consciousness. The mind, which involves in Nada does not get disturbed or diverted by external objects. Hence it is a tool to achieve concentration and control over the mind. This is Nadayoga.

Bharata has referred to the human body as 'Sariri Veena'. The body first produces Swaras. It is evident in the following sloka-

शरीरमेव वीणायां स्वराः सप्त प्रकीर्तिताः ।
तेभ्यो विनिः सुताश्चै वमातोद्येभु द्विजोत्तमाः ॥ ३० ॥
पूर्व शरीरादुद्भूता स्तोतो गच्छन्ति दारवीम् ।
ततः पुष्करजं चैवमनुयान्ति घनं (ध्वनि) पुनः (सुता) ॥ ३१ ॥²

As per yoga theory, good health is the balanced flow of energy through all the energy points of body and mind. The body will react when this normal flow is interrupted. This reaction of the body or mind results in unhealthy symptoms leading to disease. Nada yoga has the

power to establish the lost flow of this vital energy normalizing it through the mind.

Music and yoga are two interrelated subjects. Yoga practice is highly beneficial for a musician to purify the breathing apparatus and also to develop the vocal mechanism by increasing the quality of voice. The three steps of Pranayama are Rechaka (Exhalation), Puraka (Inhalation) and Kumbhaka (Retention). These 3 stages of Pranayama have direct effect on the physical and psychological health of a human being. Pranayama has great influence on vocology, the science of right voice production. Prana means vital energy and Ayama means to expand. Control over the breathing apparatus is necessary to increase this energy level to produce a powerful and melodious voice to express all the rasas of the music without any difficulty.

Paramahansa Nirajananda says – "At the time of pooraka, inhalation, when apana is rising through ida nadi, there is incredibly cold sensation. It is as if the whole being is entering into a state of hibernation: there is a feeling of total withdrawal. It is the last stage of sensory withdrawal that a person can have on the psychic level. The yogic texts also state that at the time of rechaka, exhalation, when prana is reversed there is a feeling of total void, where nothing actually comes to the surface of the mind. The mind goes absolutely blank. In kumbhaka, when prana and apana are merged at manipura, at agnimandala, then

²Yoga Darsan, Sri Panchdashanam Paramahansa, Alakh Bara, Bihar - 1993, Page No. 150

all the modifications or vrithis of the mind cease to function"³.

While singing also, a musician performs the stages of pooraka & rechaka. Quick inhalation and regulated exhalation of air is performed while singing. The ultimate aim of a yogi is to achieve spiritual realization or moksha. A musician also can attain this state of mind by singing the glory of Almighty through melodious sounds. Nadayoga is based on Sabda Samvedana meaning observation of the vibration of sounds produced from inside or outside. Sound is a form of energy and by observing sound, we absorb the energy within us. Nada is also a media for concentration as the mind is always attached to different forms of sound. When we start observing the sound it touches the consciousness and the soul experiences the tranquility of mind. There is a close relation between Swar Sadhana (practice of breathing - in yogic language, swara means the rhythm of breathing) and Sur Sadhana (practice of singing). Sur sadhana is totally based on Swar sadhana as we cannot produce any sound without inhalation and exhalation.

In the context of the origin of Nada, Matanga has given 'Nirukthi' for the word Nada and that too is influenced by yoga. 'न' is beej mantra for pranavayu (vital air) and 'द' stands for fire. Pranavayu & fire give birth to 'Nada'.

नकारं प्राणनामानं दकारमनलं विदुः ।

जातः प्राणाग्निर्संयोगात्तेन नादोभिधीयते ॥ ६॥⁴

⁴Edited by - Pt. S. Subramanya Sastri - 1949, सं. र. भाग १, अध्याय-३, श्लोक-०६

"Musical sound or Nada is said to manifest itself by the interaction of fire (energy) and air (i.e. breath) in the region of the body extending from the Manipura Chakra to the Visuddhi Chakra, i.e. from the navel to the throat. The principle involved is that the grosser the medium of sound production the lower the pitch of the sound produced and vice versa. This explains the 'gatra veena' in yogic terms. This is similar to the relation between the vibrating string and the pitch value of the notes produced. The lesser the length of the string, the higher is the pitch. This principle too was discovered by the yogis in the operation of the gatra veena, which is plucked at its upper extremity where vocal organ (vocal apparatus) is located"⁵.

Music and Medicine

Music has the power to produce various types of feelings in human mind like melancholy, excitement and a state of ecstasy. Feelings/emotions/attitude/ state of mind, call it what you will, form a major factor in how quickly and well a patient heals, whether he is ailing from a physical or psychological illness. Hence, modern science and medicine are now exploring the healing powers of music for treatment of patients with psychological and physical ailments. In the west it has been accepted as a form of treatment and many experiments are conducted for the treatment of various diseases.

A case study mentioned in the seminar of

⁵Music and sound is yoga- Vimala Musalagaonkar, Psychology of Music - Report of Seminar 1975 Sangit Natak Academy, New Delhi.

Sangit Natak Academy is quite interesting. "Cortazzi studied the effect of music on the behavioural problems of 12 female adults of age below 25. Her attempt was at reinstating these subjects in normal hospital setting. The subjects participated in music activities for an hour per day for 9 months after which the introducing of primary school activities followed. At the end of 4 years, 4 subjects proved to be complete failures while 4 subjects integrated successfully in the occupational therapy unit as full time members of the hospital. 4 subjects though requiring attention, were (a) able to accept relationship with some equanimity, (b) beginning to learn from each other, and (c) showing an increase in concentration span.⁶⁹

Many diseases are developed due to psychological problems. It is an accepted fact that music stimulates the pituitary gland whose secretions affect the nervous system. All the negative aspects of life like anger, worry, selfishness and ego are the major feelings leading the mind to stress, inferiority complex, depression, anxiety, hypertension and various other psychological disorders ending with high and low blood pressure and many other similar diseases. A relaxed mind and positive emotions can play a vital role in maintaining proper health. Listening to music helps cultivate positive emotions such as optimism and self-confidence. Music therapy is mainly administered on

the mind. Listening to good music helps to control the emotions. There must be correct diagnosis of the disease for prescribing the type of music or ragas that will be helpful. Individual taste also must be taken into consideration. The word music refers to vocal and Instrumental music. Again there are different styles like Western music, Hindustani Music, Karnatic and light music. The type of music must be selected as per the individual taste and the musical intelligence of the listener. The simplest form, which can be applied for all, is 'music meditation'. It is the chanting of 'OM' with three or four selected swaras with different variations of Komal and Teevra. Producing these swaras in the correct frequency through a melodious voice attracts the mind and vibrates the cells of the body. The bliss experienced through these vibrations can change the consciousness of a person effectively.

This relaxes all the nerves and muscles of the body and helps the system to gain strength and energy. Patients of blood pressure, insomnia, mental diseases and heart troubles will get remarkable relief. There is no comparison to the human voice for the fullest expression of the intricacies of music. Human voice is not only meant for speaking but also for singing. The compass of speech rarely exceeds half an octave normally while speaking. But a cultivated voice will be able to sing in all the three octaves.

Music therapy is an accepted form of treatment in the west. It has existed in the U.S.A since around 1944 when the first-

degree programme in the world was founded at Michigan State University. There are many other national and international organizations such as the Nordoff Robbins Center for Music Therapy and The Bonny Institute. Clinical Music Therapy in Britain was pioneered in the 60s and 70s by French cellist Juliet Alvin. There are courses in Music Therapy in Bristol, Cambridge, Edinburgh and London.

In India, The Raga Research Centre, Chennai is conducting studies on Indian ragas to evaluate the therapeutic effects with the help of musicians and doctors. Pankaja Kasthuri Ayurvedic Medical College, Trivandrum, Kerala has recently introduced a 6 months course in music therapy for creating music therapists. For instance, in Karnatic music Nilambari raga can create the sleepy feeling. Sleeplessness can be treated by making the affected person listen to this raga. Similarly Malayamarutam raga has the capacity to awaken a sleepy person.

In India the wonderful effects of music are yet to be explored. All children must be provided the facility to learn this art, since music also influences the formation of character and behavior of a person. The action of man is the result of exercise of will power and nerve power. "A musical sound has to pass through the tympanum, the middle ear, the sensory nerve, the brain, before it can extend its influences over the body through the motor nerves. These different physical agents concerned in the

production of a musical effect must be healthy."⁷

Every citizen must be motivated to listen to good music by popularizing the values and benefits of this art form. Good music has the power to create tranquility in a person. A little training in music can contribute to the development of a good and well-rounded personality. Music is a divine art and through it, one can experience the supreme reality, which cannot be explained in words. Music is neither visible nor touchable; it cannot be tasted or smelt. Music is heard and when the ear perceives the vibrations of the sound, the mind experiences infinite bliss as it touches the emotional sphere of human consciousness. Music has the power to arouse different sentiments depending upon its nature & style and the emotional state and the listening capacity of the listener. Music is heard in different ways as per the individual intelligence and emotional status of the listener.

It has certainly been proved that music is a subject not only for entertainment but also for clinical management. But there is a need for proper studies on the systems of music. In India this area is yet to be exploited in a proper way with encouragement for more research by Government agencies and Universities. If this is included in the curriculum of the music departments of the Universities, especially as a subject of specialization at the P.G. level, tremendous results can be achieved and definitely it will give a new dimension to music and musicians. □

⁶⁹ *Psychology of Music, Report of Seminar 1975 Sangit Natak Academy, New Delhi. "Usha Ram".*

⁷ Page 14, *The psychology of music, H. P. Krishna Rao, Asian Educational Services, New Delhi - 1984.*

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FROM RAGAS TO RICHES

by Shri T. V. Sairam

The raga system is a contribution by the Indian sub-continent unique to the World of music. Matanga, the ancient Indian musicologist (9-10th Century AD) was perhaps the earliest writer to define a raga. 'Raga', he said 'is the kind of sound composition consisting of melodic movements which has the effect of colouring the hearts of men.

A raga in Indian music is a melodic abstraction, which finds its existence somewhere between a scale and a fixed melody. Some authors have coined a new word to define a raga: 'melodic scale'.

Indian ragas, which are formed by a series of swaras are melodies with a difference. They differ from their Western counterparts in terms of the flexibility they enjoy in the treatment of their notes. They are just not mere melodies; they are not based on precise frequencies of the mechanical notes, but on a notion of swaras, the self shining entities that could easily get decomposed into partials and harmonics. It is the appropriate inclusion of these partials that renders a raga unique and sans pareil. Further, the concept of anuswaras or semi-tones and their relevance in determining the characteristics of a raga indicate the extent to which the manipulative mind of the Indians could go! It is the Indian genius again which has recognized that ragas are not just conceived for sensual entertainment alone. As their vibrations can touch one's interiors, they could be made use of as a powerful tool in the treatment of ailments concerning

the body, mind and spirit. Anuswaras, which render richness in variety and depth to the raga system, in right combination can even work therapeutic wonders. Unlike in the Western system, the raga system allows - rather welcomes - *anuswaras*. However, it would not mean that any anuswara can be given a free access to any raga, as there exists rigid conventions in their selection for depicting a particular raga.

The immense scope offered through permutation and combination of swaras makes it possible to produce an equivalent raga for every Western scale. For example, Nattai, a Carnatic raga (Hindustani equivalent: Jog) is an equivalent raga for the Blue Scale. The Lydian Scale is represented by the Carnatic raga, Kalyani (Hindustani equivalent: Yaman). The major scale in Western music has an equivalent in the Carnatic raga Sankarabharanam, (Bilawal Thaata in the Hindustani school).

While music as a whole is well recognized for its entertainment value throughout the globe, it was the Indian genius that could work out a subtle relationship between the sound and the living organisms. By categorizing the otherwise universal sound into specific *ragas* and *raginis*, an elaborate system of music could be evolved through permutation and combination of talas, swaras and bhavas. It is the prescription of a particular combination of all these components that renders the character or individuality to a particular raga, which makes it unique in the Universe of sound vibrations.

Each raga, depending on its characteristics, can recall or intensify certain emotions or their combinations in listeners. Emotions, such as, anger, fear, lust, joy, depression etc. could be accentuated depending on the emotional spectrum inherent in a particular raga. The ancient and contemporary Indian theatre and cinema have been exploiting these characteristics hidden in swara-clusters (proof-ragas) and also ragas to create the required feelings in audience. It is well recognized that music could induce a stronger and quicker impact as compared to any spoken word or for that matter even non-verbal gestures or mimes.

Certain ragas do have a direct impact on emotions. This feature has made its application in theatre and in cinema, to create pathos, joy and suspense in the minds of the audience.

In one of the systems of classification, there are six fundamental raga-scales from which 126 derivatives (raginis or wives and putras or sons) emerge. Each of these six fundamental ragas has a natural correspondence with certain hours of the day as a day is divided in to six tranches and also seasons of the year.

The following table attempts to simplify:

The fundamental raga	Time of the day assigned	Season assigned	Expected attitudinal development
Hindol	Dawn	Spring	Universal love
Deepak	Evening	Summer	Compassion
Megha	Midday	Monsoon	Courage
Bhairava	Morning	August to September	Tranquility
Sri	Twilight hours	Autumn	Pure Love
Malkauns	Midnight	Winter	Valour

(From various books and own source)

Yet another system outlines 72 thaats or scales called *melakarta* from which a vast range of raga experience could be derived.

The beauty about the Indian raga system is that, it offers endless opportunities for those who are musically-inclined, for constant improvisation around a fixed

melodic scale. Depending on the definite mood or a central theme, one could embroider and decorate this melodic scale through one's enthusiasm, originality, mental make-up and emotional fall out. The musician is hardly bound by a set of notes or notions □

INTERVIEW

THE PEARL IN THE OYSTER - SUDHA RAGHUNATHAN

by Smt. Sudha Subramaniam



A recipient of innumerable titles, awards and accolades, ranging from Sangeetha Saraswathi from the Mahasannidhanam of Sringeri in 1993; Isai Peroli from Kartik Fine Arts, Chennai; Bharat Jyoti from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, New York, 1998; M.L.V Award, 1998; to Padmashri Award by the Government of India 2004, Rajiv Gandhi Award by the Union Minister of State, G.K.Vasan in Chennai on 23rd August 2007, Doctorate by the International University of Music, Colombo and so on Sudha has a number of musical releases to her credit like 'Sri Madhava' (Papanasam Sivan krithis), 'Karuna Joodavamma- The Essential Album', 'Aadikkondaar Anda Vedikkai-the dance of Siva', and others.

'Music knows no you and me. It belongs to everyone who sings. Call it Sudha's ultimate tribute to her Guru'-thus said M.L. Vasanthakumari, Sudha Raghunathan's Guru and mentor. Sudha would take pride in doing even the smallest of tasks for M.L.V. Among women, Sudha says, " M.S. Subbulakshmi, D.K. Pattamal and M.L. Vasanthakumari are definitely the trinity of Indian music. Pattamal had a strong pathanthara for rendering krithis and M.S. Amma remained unrivalled and unsurpassed. M.L.V had such a strong foundation that she never needed to practice for her katcheris."

Initially, Sudha learnt music from her mother Choodamani, for about seven to eight years. She was further tutored for about three years by T.V. Viswanathan, then by B.V. Raman and B.V. Lakshmanan. A post-graduate in Economics, Sudha owes her entry into the world of music to her mother and when she received her Government of India scholarship in 1977, there was no looking back. Her tryst with M.L.V began and it was a Guru-Sishya relationship that gained in strength with each passing day. At M.L.V's behest, Sudha or Kanyakumari would often record songs of musicians like T.M.Thyagarajan and others on tape. M.L.V. would polish the new songs in her unique way and as this was being done, the students would imbibe the song.

Sudha says she owes a lot to her in-laws who encouraged her all the way, to her husband Raghu, who was always there to support her art and to her children Kaushik and Malvika who lovingly understood that they had to excuse her presence many-a-time.

Today Kaushik is studying for his PH.D in the USA, Malvika is in 12th and Sudha is

forever striking a great balance between loving wife, caring daughter-in-law, doting mother and ardent performer. She also has to her credit the 'Samudaaya Foundation' a trust she launched for Social Welfare activities on 20th July 1999. The Trust covers a wide spectrum of activities ranging from music to education and many charitable causes.

The first time we caught her, she was on her way to a kutchery. The second time we caught her, she was going out of the country for a week and the third time we caught her she had been caught by the television people! So much for 'Really hard to get'. Anyway, we did not deter and we have for you, your very own Sudha Raghunathan and what she has to say.....

Q) Which is your favourite piece?

Ans) It is very difficult to choose and say. In tune with our changing moods, the changing scenario, the changing seasons, our choice of Raga and song for different occasions would differ. It also depends to a great extent on what we feel the audience would appreciate and would like to listen to. Among composers and their compositions, Dikshithar has a lot of majesty (Akhilandeshwari), Thyagaraja krithis are splendid. I love Papanasam Sivan, Shyama Shastri, Kannada krithis, Tamil Bharatiyaar songs and others.... At competitions, I would love to take up pieces like 'Balakrishnan...', 'Yadavaraya...', 'Hari Smarane Madho...'; there are so

many lovely songs in which you totally lose yourself and blend with the flow of the melody, the lilt of the notes, the meaning of the words, the depth of the bhava, the rhythm of the tala.

Q) As a Post-Graduate in Economics, do you feel that your knowledge of Economics has in any way helped you in the realm of music?

Ans) Macro-economics lends its flavour to the demand and supply in the musical world too. Perhaps my knowledge of Economics enables me to gain an insight into the happening world and perceive the strains of economics even in music. However, although Economics is an interesting subject, for me it is music that speaks the language of my heart.

Q) What is your view of global trends and changes in music?

Ans) Trends do change. Every five to ten years there is a major change. While I keep my roots firmly entrenched in Carnatic music, my priorities are very straight. Although we spread our branches far and wide, we must never lose our roots. For we are like Ambassadors of our nation, who spread our unique culture and values through the medium of music to even the far-flung and remote corners of the globe. Ten years ago, the Western nations couldn't differentiate much between Carnatic and Hindustani music. All Indian music was basically

thought to be Hindustani. The music of the south as different from that of the north is now gaining more popularity overseas. The Sydney music fests are well received. At Cleveland it was snowing heavily. All the Vidwans were literally shouting through fourteen inches of snow! I performed and was profoundly surprised to find a highly expectant crowd that was mesmerized for around three to four hours!

Among the recent trends, 'Jugalbandi' is a challenging experimentation. There is also the welcome trend of understanding different streams of music, music travelling places... Carnatic music is today even reaching remote places in Norway and Sweden.

But whatever the trends (even online teaching), I feel the importance of the Guru, the feel of presence, the vibrations that flow between the Guru and the Sishya are very important and essential things that cannot be dispensed with, otherwise there is that special something missing....

Q) Which is your favourite dish?

Ans) I am quite a simpleton in food habits. What you eat matters in the way you live. We have a hectic travel schedule. When we are performing we need to take care of our voice. I believe in eating Satvik food that nourishes the body and the mind. Basically I love

koottu, Avial, Vethakkuzhambu. I relish fried dishes like Poriyal (made of arum, of raw banana), cauliflower roast, the Andhra dish of kattika (brinjal) and onion called 'Noove-venkaya' (a gravy dish). I love North Indian dishes too. Rumali roti and Paneer mutter are my all-time favourites.

Q) What do you have to say about accompanists?

Ans) A wholesome rendition necessitates good accompanists. In fact, the right way to express it would be, 'A Family On Stage'. We work as one family, each person doing his or her role well, in order to ensure the success of the performance. We need to constantly encourage and motivate one another to perform well, to perform in full spirit and to enjoy what we do, for that is the only way to really do it well. A good accompanist's job is even harder than the singer's, I would say. For he has to gauge the mood, the pause, the temperament; have the knowledge not only of the beats and the rhythm but also of the song, the structure, the shruti and the laya. Moreover, the accompanist must be content with the importance given to him/her, although their role is of paramount importance. That is one job which is not at all easy.

Q) You are known to be an ardent devotee of Sathya Sai Baba. How

is that?

Ans) I feel that Sathya Sai Baba's blessings are with me and have been with me throughout. Puttaparthi Sai Baba did my namakaranam, aksharabhyasam and ear-boring ceremony. He named me Geetha Sudha and said that he would call me Geetha and I would be Sudha for the rest of the world.

Q) You have been involved in teaching the nuances of classical music to the next generation? What would you like to say of your students?

Ans) My students love music and imbibe it well. We share a unique relationship based on the bond of music that knits us together. Two of my students are recipients of the Central Government Scholarship and one is under the Junior Scholarship Scheme.

Q) Do you have any message for the students of music?

Ans) Carnatic music is so deep that we are all 'Once a student, Always a student'. A Guru is very important. Learning is a lifelong process and humility and reverence for the Guru is essential. I surrendered absolutely to my Guru and although I was not living in a Gurukulam, I have never

missed a single moment when I could have been with her. Every spare moment was spent with M.L.V. Just like the parents aid the child in his/her first steps, in his/her stumbling blocks, so does a Guru point out our mistakes and correct them. The rapport with the Guru is akin to that of mother and child, father and child. Of course, students today need to accomplish more academically, but they must learn to cope. Practice, 'Saadhakam', is very important.

Q) What is your plan for the future? What do you feel about the future of Carnatic music?

Ans) To continue singing, to continue serving mankind and to live a worthy life. Carnatic music is a rich and deep reservoir from where we are able to communicate but a reflection of the depth. To realize the depth, one will have to venture into that ocean of bounty, for which even a lifetime is too short. The knowledge and spirituality in Carnatic music is gaining prominence among music lovers the world over.

Thank you. That was the traverse with Sudha. That is then the extent of the depth. So deep you can't reach the depth..... □



PERIYAVAA AND HIS AFFINITY TO VEENA

by Neyveli Santhanagopalan



In *Lalitha Sahasranaama*, one of the *naamas*: "*Nija sallaapa.....Kacchapi*" is singularly attributable to Shri Shri Maha Periyavaa. His *sadupadeshas*, conversations with devotees, which by themselves were not only morale boosters, but also sequences of *Atyadbhuta*, *Aparimita*, *Rasaanubhava*. We can say in a nutshell that Periyavaa's *avataara* is itself a descent of the Veena in the form of a *Maanusha Shareera*.

The *Maadhuryam*, *Gambheeryam*, *Mrudutvam*, *Suswaram*, *Sukhanubhaavam*, *Gurutvam*, simplicity, philosophy, elevating nature and inexplicable divinity of the celestial Veena were all the natural qualities that incessantly flowed through Periyavaa.

Shri Periyavaa had many a time described the greatness of the Veena and has explained in precision how this concept of the Veena should be understood and how efficiently the Veena can be coordinated with one's own spiritual *Saadhana* and reach the ultimate goal of life, *Moksha* itself. Shri Periyavaa had always insisted on the importance of a proper Guru to perform the *Sangeetha Saadhana* through the Veena. This can be well understood with the help of an anecdote:

Once a *vainika* had come to Periyavaa to show his prowess in the instrument. After he had finished playing, Periyavaa asked him who his Guru was, for which the reply came: "I am my own Guru." Periyavaa just said: "I can see that." Thus we can clearly see from the above incident that, **though the Veena, by itself is a friend, guide**

and philosopher one needs a Maanushya Guru to take him/her to that level of understanding the Gurutvam of the Veena.

Shri Periyavaa had extolled the sweet tone of the blemishless Veena by quoting Appar's *Thevaaram*: "*Maasil Veenaiyum.....*" in which a list of earthly objects have been enlisted which are capable of elevating us to the state of *Brahmanubhaavam*. The first and foremost in the list is the blemishless Veena ("*Maasil Veenai*"). The adjective *Maasil* (*Maasu + il*) has been given an enlightening and unique interpretation by Periyavaa: This expression indicates that **both the design of the instrument and the Melam (fret arrangement) should be impeccable and without any faults i.e. 100% faultless since, by interacting with the Veena, the vidyaarthi is going to enter into the world of Naada Yoga wherein perfection is both the means and the end.**

Another expression from *Gnaana Sambandar's* *Thevaaram* clearly mentions that Lord Parameshwara Himself is revelling in his own music created by his soft and dexterous playing on the veena: "*Miga nalla Veenai thadavi*". Here the *padam 'thadavi'* has been effectively explained by Periyavaa to understand as **to how one has to fondle the Veena rather than to fight with it, to bring the result.**

Once a lady *vainika* prostrated before Periyavaa and prayed to Him to initiate her

into *Shrividya Mandalam*. Periyavaa casually asked her what she was doing for her daily prayers, for which she replied that she was reciting *Lalitha Sahasranamam* and playing the Veena after her daily morning bath. Periyavaa smiled and said: "Do you think you need a mantra other than these two which are by themselves a *Shrividya Upasana*?" **Who but Periyavaa on this earth can reveal such subtle secrets of Naada Yoga Saadhana?**

Once Shri Periyavaa was camping in a village south of Tamil Nadu; a vainika and a staunch devotee of Periyavaa went there for darshan. Periyavaa's usual *Aagna* was to do *Naada Samarpana* during the *Chandramouleeshwara Nitya Puja* occasion. Periyavaa asked: "Have you brought your Veena with you?"

"No Periyavaa," he answered.

"Don't worry," he said, "in the *Agrahaaram*, you will find a Veena at a particular house. Go and bring that. The problem is solved."

The Veena was brought and tuned. Periyavaa requested for the Raaga *Shankarabharanam*. Just then it was noticed by the vidwan that the Panchama fret was not there. When Periyavaa was informed of this, he suddenly replied: "So what? Play *Hamsavinodini* !" **How deep was the knowledge of the science of music that Periyavaa had, is highlighted by this incident.**

Shri Periyavaa was an exponent in Veena playing and like the many faces of his that he has concealed to the outer world, only the fortunate few had the lifetime *bhagyam* of having the darshan and of listening to

the *Aparashankara*'s revelations on the Veena. Since music can be mistakenly understood as a sense of gratifying pursuit, a pure sanyasin is not allowed to perform before any common mortal. **So we can see Periyavaa's Dharma Achaaram in every action of His.** Those who had the good fortune of experiencing Periyavaa's *Nitya Puja* had observed the golden hands of Periyavaa playing the '*Sarali*' on the little golden Veena for the purpose of *Shodashopachara* which includes *Vaadya*, *Nritya upachaara* and the keener observer could not have missed the '*Bharata Mudra*' that was offered to the Goddess. Shri Periyavaa has always explained, quoting *Saint Yagnavalkya* that **music is the easiest and direct path to salvation, if one becomes adept in the principles of the Veena and subtleties of *Thaalam*:** "Veena Vaadana....."

According to Periyavaa, Shri Muthuswami Dikshitar, a perfect *Advaitin* (we can see from the way he has praised all the deities and *Shanmata*) has enunciated the *Raagamarga* of *Sangeetha Upasana* in his krithi: "*Balagopala*" (in the Raaga *Bhairavi*), in the line: "*Vainika Gaayaka.....*", which reveals the intimate link between the celestial Veena and the *Gaatra Veena* i.e. the Human Body.

May Shri Periyavaa's *Avyaya Karuna* (boundless mercy) lead us to the sublime goal of Veenai Matam, the easiest and the surest way to salvation.

Special address delivered at the Veenarpanam Seminar on the occasion of Sri Kanchi Mahaswamy Peetharohana Shatabdi Mahotsav held at Bharatiya Music & Arts Society on December 5, 2006 □

KNOW YOUR CORE COMPETENCE

by Vijay Natesan



Conventional wisdom has it that jargons like "core competency" and "positioning" preached by marketing and management gurus like Philip Kotler and Michael Porter are ideally suited to the business world. It's a powerful case. Except that it is not true. Scrutinized skillfully, it can be demonstrated that these concepts can be applied not only in the corporate world but also in professions like dance, music, fine arts et al. I would like to draw light to this perspective by citing examples of drummers (*Mridangists*) of South India.

Going back to the 1950's, one would readily accept that the two doyen *mridangists* were Palakkad Mani Iyer and Palani Subramania Pillai. Both of them came from a different school with each mastering the techniques of his respective school. However, I would be failing in my duty as the author of this article if I failed to mention the names of C.K. Murugabhoopathy and T.K. Murthy who are genius *mridangists* of high repute. But there were not many *mridangists* in the same league during that era. Contrarily, one witnessed an emergence of *mridangists* par excellence in the 1960's and 1970's. These included artists like Palghat Raghu, Vellore Ramabhadran, Umayalpuram Sivaraman, T.V. Gopalakrishnan, Trichy Sankaran, Guruvayoor Dorai et al.

One can imagine the fierce competition that these *mridangists* would have had to face to earn a name for themselves in the field of Carnatic Music and more so in the musically intellectual city of

Chennai. This lends credence to the importance of realizing one's own core competencies and then accordingly positioning oneself in the competitive world of music. If one analyzes the styles of each one of the musicians mentioned in the above list, one can appreciate the point which I am trying to derive through this article.

Starting with Shri Palghat Raghu (Raghu Sir as fondly called), he inspired a novel style of playing the instrument with an emphasis on the *Kanakku* (Mathematics) aspect of rhythm. One still cherishes his distinct solos which introduced music lovers to a different paradigm of approaching and presenting solos with utmost precision. Contrary to this, Vellore Ramabhadran Sir's playing had less emphasis on rhythm and greater emphasis on *Nadais*. His smooth and mellifluous accompaniment to vocal and instrumental concerts earned him an insurmountable place in the melody world. Ditto can be concluded about Shri Guruvayoor Dorai who is one of the finest accompanists ever witnessed by Carnatic Music.

Moving on to Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman, it goes without saying that he is one of the greatest *mridangists* of all time. His fingering techniques, speed (especially *chappus* and *arai chappus*), execution and precision scaled the art of playing

mrudangam to a different level.. Similarly, Trichy Sankaran, the torch bearer of the Palani School is one of the doyen mridangists of Carnatic Music whose playing can be enjoyed by one and all. They have dazzled and still continue to dazzle the audiences across the world with their scintillating solos.

And how can one forget the maverick mridangist Shri T.V. Gopalakrishnan who was the foremost mridangist to start the Tala Vadya Katcheri format. He introduced a unique style of playing the instrument with Gummukki. His concerts with the genius vocalist Balamuralikrishna rose the concert levels to such a high echelon that his mridangam was quoted as a "singing mridangam".

The above mentioned analysis of artists, merely drives home the point that different artists possess different natural skills and are gifted with different physical abilities as well as capabilities. For example one may have long fingers whereas the other may have short ones. Now both the artists (say mridangists) may not be able to play the instrument in the same style though they could belong to the same school. Understanding one's own physical scope and skill will help the artist in developing his unique style of playing the instrument and assist him in distinctly positioning himself amongst other artists. As it is said; "World is one's oyster", one can definitely enhance his/her level of playing the instrument and scale greater heights by taking lessons from these great stalwarts.

□

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CHAMPION OF UPA PAKKAVADYAS

by Dr. Sulochana Rajendran

(There was a time when full-bench cutcheri with half a dozen ancillary percussion accompaniments - Upa Pakkavadyas - was the fashion if not order of the day. The gradual depletion of ancillaries leading to a compact cutcheri with mainly Mrudangam as the percussion accompaniment sent shivers down Upa Pakkavadyakaras, who apprehended elimination from concert stage. There were few takers for Kanjira. And H. P. Ramachar, better known as Kanjira Ramachar, championing the cause of the Upa Pakkavadyas sought avenues of experimentation and expression. A self-made, independent man, though a bit impatient but not impulsive, Ramachar was constructive in his perception and forthright in expression.

His concern and efforts in giving the Upa Pakkavadyas a face lift resulted in the "Mahila Laya Madhuri" - an all-woman Tala Vadya Ensemble - way back at the dawn of the nineties of the last century.

Following is an article based on the informal tete-e-tete Dr. Sulochana Rajendran had with the maestro and slightly modified from the original published in "Free Press Journal". - Ed.)

Sweetness oozes in the very name "Mahila Laya Madhuri" and it is all nimble - fingered youngsters that Ramachar has

trained to do this feat. Comprising mrudangam, kanjira, ghatam, morsing, dolu and konnokol and played respectively by Shashikala, Latha. Geeta Srinidhi, Bhagyalakshmi, Gokalakshamma and Jaganmatha Vasudevamurthy, the ensemble came into the limelight when Doordarshan first telecast it. The unit has since gone abroad playing at far off African countries and in Singapore but awaits patronage from domestic organizations. "There is only one recognized female Kanjira artiste that is my daughter, B. R. Lata", said the proud father. "Also there is only one female Morsing artiste. Bhagyalakshmi" again trained by Ramachar. His granddaughter Shashikala is being groomed as a Morsing artiste. The ensemble showed all promises to turn into a Eka Kutumba Laya Lahari'.

Reminiscing his past during this writer's visit to Bangalore in 1990. Ramachar said that way back in 1936, he (then a lean, lanky boy of eleven) had to literally be helped on to the stage to substitute a mrudangist (since the senior vidwan did not turn up) to accompany the stentorian voiced Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar at Bangalore. An uneasy calm prevailed among the audience. But once the stroke was



sounded his mettle spoke for itself. Characteristic of Chembai the magnanimous, the maestro applauded him at every turn, at every pace-shift and inspired him to play with zest. It put him into the limelight, strengthened his self confidence and helped him turn into a percussionist of eminence and a master of the Kanjira.

Forthright, but impatient if not impulsive, Ramachar presented a picture of a self-made independent man seeking avenues of self expression and experimentation. That he had to weather many a storm in life, at home and in the profession was reflected in the touch of cynicism one discerned while talking to him.

Proud that he hailed from a family of Yakshagana artistes and had his solid training under his father, the mrudangam maestro H. Putachar, Ramachar had been accompanying him on the Kanjira since the age of six and this earned him the title, of 'Master Bal Vidwan' at the age of seven years from Krishna Wodeyar the then Mysore Maharaja.

There was however some bitterness when he reminisced his childhood, struggling to maintain a balance between his profession, Mrudangam and his passion, Kanjira.

"A tiff with my father got me out of the house at 18 and having to fend for myself

and later on my family, I could not stand on my own with Kanjira and Upa Pakkavadya alone and was left with no alternative but to take up mrudangam seriously" he mused. But the ego surfaces, "I never went in search of cutcheris. Offers came my way. I would rather do odd jobs to make both ends meet. In fact, I even did a stint of taxi driving."

"Was it not tiring and interfering with your performances?" I asked. "No, taxi driving was only a parttime job, to supplement my earnings from concerts"

But a rumour that Ramachar had given up playing Kanjira and Mrudangam and taken to taxi driving took him off the roads. A blessing in disguise, of course. "That strengthened my will power to pour my heart and soul into the percussive art."

Kanjira was Ramachar's passion, though he played Mrudangam out of sheer necessity. Ever since his childhood this one-hand manipulation (required for Kanjira) attracted his attention and he tried to follow with one hand what his father did with both (on the Mrudangam). Circular and tambourine-like in shape, wooden framed and covered on one side with some type of skin, probably that of wild lizard, Kanjira has since ancient times been a folk instrument and used occasionally in congregational singing. In the south it was given a new lease of life

and elevated to classical field by Pudukkottai Manpoondia Pillai and his disciple Dakshinamurthy Pillai made a legend of it bringing it close to Mrudangam nuances.

Having a unique grip over the Kanjira, Ramachar in his own right had done some researches and produced 18 types of the instrument, each having its own characteristics. "Melodious rhythm and modulated nuances are not beyond its reach", he claimed. He demonstrated its potentiality in a lecture-cum demonstration at the Indian Fine Arts Festival, Madras presenting all the 18 varieties and their respective specialities.

The secret of his success lay in his technique of "faithfully reproducing and responding to the individual style as well as the inspiration of the time." Though as a mrudangist he tended to be aggressive, his Kanjira play "sobered and toned him up", remarked a connoisseur. And exposures to concerts he had, teaming up with no less a person than the percussion phenomenon Palghat Mani Iyer and others like Murugabhupati, Umayalpuram Sivaraman, Vellore Ramabhadran, Guruvayoor Dorai had enriched his style.

His teaming up with Trichy Sankaran at 9th Talavadyotsav of the Percussive Arts Centre, Bangalore (1990), where

both were recipients of awards - Sankaran, the Palghat Mani Memorial Award and Ramachar, the Palani Subramania Pillai Memorial Award - accompanying the violin duet of Lalgudi Jayaraman and G.J.R. Krishnan was a memorable event. It was short and sweet but a spick and span instrumental quartet, the stringed duo flowing smooth on melodic contours while the percussion pair moved on with splendid strokes. The fusion of melody and rhythm, rhythmic nuances with melodic modulations, the sarvalagu ease, the split-second shiftings and the varied pace-shifts all went to prove that Ramachar rightfully earned his name, "Kanjira Ramachar" though he might have had a major role in concerts as mrudangist and accompanied stalwarts right from Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer to the present day maestros.

The segment of Upa Pakkavadyas has certainly been made poorer by Ramachar's demise last year. The members of his "Mahila Laya Madhuri", both individually and collectively should continue the mission he commenced with greater zest and involvement as by now they must have all matured into fine experienced artistes in their own right. That would be the right way of remembering the maestro and paying the best tribute as well as continuing the mission. □

BOOK REVIEW

A CLASSIC HISTORY

by Shri P. P. Ramachandran

From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy by Lakshmi Subramanian; Published by Oxford University Press; Price Rs. 595/-

Profoundly thought provoking, painstakingly and patiently researched and written in a turgid style are the three aspects that strike a reader who goes through the volume under review.

Appropriately the first copy was received by Shri N. Murali, President of the Madras Music Academy, from the hands of that eminent musicologist, Dr. V. V. Srivatsa.

The book is a social history of Music in South India and has as its starting point the Tanjore Court. The Kings of Tanjore were not only connoisseurs of music but were scholars of eminence. The role of Serfoji in codifying and implementing the notations of Carnatic Music is well known. From Tanjore, patronage of this divine art glided to Travancore and Mysore. From royal support to being cultivated by the common people was a gradual process. Cultural establishments began to appear and the Madras Music Academy's establishment in 1927 was the high-watermark in the history of Carnatic Music. In fact the Academy became the Cultural Custodian of Carnatic Music.

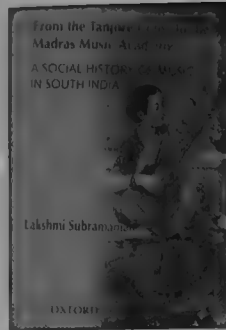
Concerts used to last for four to six hours at the beginning of the twentieth century. Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar who devised the present format of concerts insisted that katcheris had to incorporate a specific

selection of musical compositions like the varnam which helped in voice relaxation and includes a variety of both melodies and rhythms and that alone would keep the format of Carnatic music alive.

The book has its cut-off date as the 1970s. After this there has been a lot of corporate sponsorship for music programmes.

The author Lakshmi Subramanian is a Senior Fellow in History at the Centre for Social Sciences, Kolkata. The genesis of the book is a preliminary paper she presented in 1998 under the aegis of this Centre on "History of modern classical music in India". She embarked on a Social History of Music in South India, about the ways in which a nationalist discourse was framed for the reconstitution of the performing arts in India, about what music meant for nation building and for the individual enthusiast and conversely what the changing material context meant for the performers and the art form. The result is this book about music, its makers and managers in South India.

Beginning with a quote from the poet Ramalingaswamy "Dharma Miga Chennai", the author offers a masterly analysis of how music enveloped and developed Madras city. A scholarly account



of the genealogy of Carnatic music is presented with special emphasis on the musical explosion in the Cauvery basin. Purandardasa was a key figure who not only composed several padams and devotional songs but was also among the first to develop a teaching methodology for the tradition. The great work of Govinda Dikshitar and Venkatamakhin - who outlined a scheme of 72 melakarta - are also highlighted. The Marathi rule that was consolidated in the 18th and 19th century led to a cultural efflorescence in Tanjore. The Classical Trinity represented a distinct, subjective and individual artistic ideal that came together to produce a remarkably composite, yet richly diverse templates of musical ideas and expression.

Lakshmi Subramanian brings out succinctly how music moved from the quiet courtyards of Tanjore to the Concert halls of Madras and how in this process the social context of music and performance underwent a striking transformation. It has been clearly brought out how a century of music led to changes in patronage and how the art form was affected by this. The role of the western-educated Brahmin elite has also been clearly elucidated as also the forces that played a crucial role in developing the music idiom.

The Madras Music Academy eminently succeeded in maintaining the pristine purity of the classical tradition through its annual conferences, through its journals, which carried the results of valuable research. The author also covers the skirmish with the Tamil Isai Sangam and the controversial Brahmin-non Brahmin identity and the demand for rendering only Tamil songs at

concerts.

Special mention must be made of a chapter devoted to the devadasi system which was the traditional custodian of a section of the performing arts. The role music played in the freedom movement has been brought out cogently. Broadcasting of music as pointed out by Dr. V. K. Narayana Menon ".... has given our musicians the quality of precision and economy. The red light in the studio door is a stern disciplinarian. Broadcasting has also given the musicians a clearer sense of proportion and a clearer definition of values that matter in music".

The book is a remarkable account of the transformation and evolution of Carnatic music. It has 427 footnotes and the bibliography gives details of 109 books and 31 articles, apart from a list of contemporary journals, tracts and publications, both private and government, in English and Tamil.

One does wish that the style of writing was less heavy so that the common man can benefit from it. One example of denseness of style from P 144 is given below.

"One cannot overstate the self-consciousness of the project and, as in any engagement with an aesthetic experience, the distinction between a rhetorical overlay and an individual subjective orientation or a collective invocation was not always easy to figure out".

The volume under review is valuable to students and scholars of history, music sociology and South India and is warmly commended for solid and sustained reading. □

Homage

by **Sulochana Pattabhiraman**

Any form of art does not flourish if not learnt at the feet of the Guru and without his blessings. The knowledge acquired cannot be meaningful if not guided by a preceptor, especially in fine arts such as music & dance. Any amount of learning from cassettes, CDs & DVDs will not have the positive impact of an acknowledged & worthy Guru's personal supervision.

The passing away of a number of eminent teachers in the Carnatic music sphere recently has left a seemingly endless, though inevitable vacuum that is difficult to fill.



B.V. RAMAN

The brothers B. V. Raman and B. V. Lakshmanan were the gentle giants of carnatic music who strictly adhered to sampradaya without indulging in undignified gimmicks and pyro-

techniques. B. V. Raman passed away recently. It was fortuitous that their skills were shaped and moulded by the inimitable Tiger Varadacharya and they imbibed his incomparable bani from which they never swerved till the end. They might

not have been flooded with concert offers, but they have left an indelible mark by their high standard of teaching, solid paatantharam, deep vidwath and optimum standards of propriety.

THIRUVENGADU A. JAYARAMAN

One of the severe blows that Carnatic Music has suffered in recent months is the passing away of Thiruvengadu A. Jayaraman, who enjoyed a long innings in his musical career. Belonging to Thiruvengadu, near Seergazhi, his natural talent and musical sensibilities were fine tuned by the redoubtable vidwan Madurai Mani Iyer. He provided vocal support to his Guru in many concerts. A top grade artiste of Prasar Bharati, Jayaraman was a repository of a wide range of compositions of many composers and also an authority on the compositions of Siddhar fraternity. Jayaraman was a treasure house of Virutham largely comprising sage Agasthya's verses in Tamil and his soulful rendition created a serene spiritual ambience. He never traded traditional values for glitz, glitter or glamour. He evolved his own style with complete shruthi alignment, spick and span, kruthi versions and captivating sarvalagu kalpana



swarams. Following the practice of his Guru, Jayaraman always included a Navagraha kruthi of Dikshitar in his kutchcheris. He was a vidwan who sported a low profile and was never one to elbow his way seeking opportunities, name, fame or lucre. A recipient of many awards, Jayaraman was a vidwan of great dignity maintaining an impeccable sense of decorum on the concert stage.



T. MUKTHA

T. Muktha, one of the last doyens of the much revered Dhanammal bani passed away at the age of 92 in March 2007. An authority on Padams and

Javalis, Mukthamma enjoyed singing the Navagraha kritis and others of Muthuswami Dikshitar. Her musical expression had a robust yet extremely melodic vein running through it. She was a generous teacher, easily approachable and loved sharing her knowledge with keen students. She was a large hearted artiste who never criticized the performances of other vidwans but was appreciative of the positive aspects. Her duet concerts with her elder sister Brinda were the toast of the cognoscenti. Brinda and Muktha received their initial training from their mother Kamakshi Ammal and later under the veteran Kancheepuram Naayanaa Pillai.

T. Muktha, a well respected Guru has passed on her legacy to many disciples

including S. Sowmya, Reeta Rajan, Nirmala Sunderrajan, Subhashini Parthasarathy and others.

K.R. KEDARANATHAN

Semmangudi R. Srinivasa Iyer had bequeathed his rich musical wealth to a legion of sishyas and K.R. Kedaranathan, retired professor of music, Palghat Music College, was



one of the seniormost among them. He had a holistic approach to his art never stooping to compromise. His values were high, and in his halcyon days he harnessed with distinction, variety, dignity and accuracy in his sensitive musical expression. His inherent knowledge, authentic paatantharam and over flowing repository anchored by numerous compositions of various composers in different languages drew students to him like bees to a hive. He was a genius of a tunesmith and his attractive melodies had a distinctive quality that synthesized the angelic beauty of the Hindustani idiom with the regal mien of the carnatic system. His wife Meera Kedaranathan is a musician in her own right and carries on the good work of her husband. Perhaps Kedaranathan's musicianship was not sung as much as it deserved but he will be missed by his entire student community and South Indian music aficionados.



RAJAPPA IYER

Born in 1916 at Kumbakonam, the Mridanga vidwan Rajappa Iyer earned the reputation that whoever has the benefit of his

tutelage and guidance would automatically become vidwans of high caliber. This tribute was paid to him by none other than the percussion genius Palghat Mani Iyer. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer praised him for his unlimited vidya daanam. The legion of disciples he trained is too numerous to be listed. Among them are Srimushnam Rajarao, K.R. Ganesh (son and disciple), Bala Shankar, Umayalpuram Mali, Pazhani Kumar, Manoj Siva, Kalakkaadu Srinivasan and a host of others. Rajappa Iyer has accompanied such stalwarts as Ariyakudi, Papanasam Sivan, T.K. Rangachari, M.D. Ramanathan, Lalgudi Jayaraman and others. He was also an expert in lecture demonstrations on Mridangam and Ghatam. His passion for art was such that he became a mridangam vidwan instead of an auditor. His gurus included Azhaganambi Pillai and Sakkottai Ranga Iyengar. It was sheer dedication and an awesome commitment towards his art that made him a shining guru in the field of laya. He passed away on March 5, leaving hundreds of vidwans mourning his death.

A. SUNDARESAN

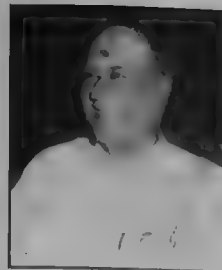
Vidwan A. Sundaresan was yet another carnatic vidwan who was struck down by

the compelling force of nature. A disciple of vidwan C. V. Krishnamoorthy Iyer, a musician belonging to the Thyagaraja Sishya Parampara, took him under his wing and shaped his inherent

potential to appreciable levels. Sundaresan was an impassioned artiste who hardly made compromises in his teaching methods. Even a young student had to get his lines right. He preferred group teaching just to encourage healthy competition and also to create an atmosphere of camaraderie, conducive for the process of learning to be more relaxed and jovial. He was a thinking musician concentrating on the intricate micro tonal gamakas, subtleties of ragas, eschewing any irrelevance. He was an imaginative tunesmith whose magnum opus was the melody he provided for the Mukunda Mala of Sri Kulashekara Alwar with appropriate chittaswaras. His students include Gayathri Venkatraghavan, B. Narayani, E.N. Krithika and Vasumathi Desikan who are all performing artistes of considerable merit. His method of writing notation was absolutely precise and he has held several workshops to teach rare compositions of different composers.

T. M THYAGARAJAN

During the past one year, the sphere of Camatic music has become poorer by the passing away of many stalwarts in the field



such as Sangeetha Kalanidhi T.M. Thyagarajan, vidwans A. Sundaresan, Thiruvengadu Jayaraman, K.R. Kedaranathan, B.V. Raman, Vidushi T. Muktha, R.

Visweshwaran, Mridangam maestro Kumbakonam Rajappa Iyer.

In the passing away of T.M. Thyagarajan, the customary expressions "end of an era, has left an irreplaceable void, a huge loss to camatic music", and so on do not adequately reflect the vacuum created by his absence. TMT, known as the preserver of the Tanjavur music tradition was a descendant of a very special artistic lineage. A vidwan of extraordinary musical wisdom, exemplary character and excellent culture, he joined the privileged stable of Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer who held his disciple in high esteem. TMT had many strings to his artistic bow as a performer, Guru, composer, tunesmith, administrator, et al. "Take an ideal and give your whole life to it", said Vivekananda and that is precisely what T.M. Thyagarajan did. He was a man with a mission.

S. V. PARTHASARATHY

Professor Sangeetha Samrat S.V. Parthasarathy was the son of the famous writer, S. V. V. who was so popular because of his ready wit and humour. He had benefited by the musical guidance under

titans like T. S. Sabesha Iyer, K. Ponnaiah Pillai, Tiger Varadacharya and Saathoor Krishna Iyengar. He was a top ranking artiste in camatic music of All India Radio and also a producer of light music in the top grade category. He had worked in the Annamalai University. He held the post of producer of camatic and light music in AIR, Tiruchirapalli for 22 years. He produced many quality programmes such as operas. Raga Vilakkam, Keerthananjali and special interviews with great musicians of that era. In light music he made his mark, tuning many songs for popular artistes T.M. Sounderrajan, P.B. Shrinivas, P. Susheela and others. His contribution to the Madras Music Academy as a senior member of its expert committee was considerable. His music for 20 songs on Jesus Christ was known as Aanmavin Ragangal. A vidwan of worthy caliber, he was involved with Carnatic music till the very last, providing advanced training to senior students in vocal music and veena.

The entire musical fraternity has been orphaned by these great stalwarts crossing the divide in recent months and it is a herculean task to replace such titans in the field. □

SREE GURAVE NAMAHA

by Smt. Sudha Subramaniam



Rhythmic patterns packed with emotion, the sound of the teka, the chapu or gumki on the toppi side, the broad articulation of solkattus, the perfect melodic modulation, the prolific laya manodharma. That is Guru Nandakumar for you.

September 16th witnessed Guru Shikhamani Sruti Laya Sudhakara Swar Sadhana Ratna Vidwan Shri T.S.Nandakumar being conferred the Sri

Shanmukhananda Bharat Ratna Dr. M.S. Subbulakshmi Best Teacher Award amidst great fanfare at the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts & Sangeetha Sabha, his home turf for years, where he has trained ordinary students into extraordinary performers. The award carried a silver lamp, a citation and a cash prize of Rs. 25,000.

The invocation song by the students of Shanmukhananda Bharatiya Sangeetha

Vidyalaya was followed by a short speech by President Shri V. Shankar. While reading the citation, Convenor and Secretary Shri V. S. Amarnath Sury stressed how music is representative of divine beauty and is a mediator between the spiritual and routine life.

Guru Nandakumar trains students the world over in Mridangam, Ghatam, Kanjira, Moorsing and Konnakol. His students, both national as well as international, are 'A' Grade artists themselves. He is the recipient of several awards, including the Sangeet Natak Academy Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award. Mridanga Vidwan Shri T. S. Nandakumar who owes his lineage to the renowned Ambalapuzha brothers of Kerala, is a very simple, down-to-earth person, who cherishes his art and loves his students. When the Tsunami disaster struck, he conducted an Akhanda Naada Seva, a 24-hour non-stop musical prayer, to pray for the well-being and safety of those affected.

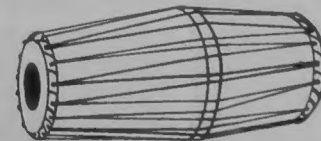
A child prodigy, his talents were discerned at an early age and he was educated by Guru Kaithavanam Madhava Das under the Gurukula Sampradaya System. He has played for artists like

Dr. Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Dr. Balamurali Krishna, Pt. Bhimsen Joshi, Prof. T. N. Krishnan, Dr. N. Rajam, Dr. N. Ramani, T. K. Govinda Rao, Hyderabad Brothers, Shri K. S. Gopalakrishnan, Shri Nedunuri Krishnamurthy and others.

The magnificent award ceremony was followed by a spate of tributes to Guru Nandakumar from faculty members of Shanmukhananda Bharatiya Sangeetha Vidyalaya, Music Triangle, Naadalaya, Padam, Chembur Fine Arts and so many more. Then to everyone's delight, a horde of Nandakumar's students swarmed the stage, sought his blessings and then charmed everyone by displaying their talent by telling the beats on the mike. Well-rehearsed and captivating, they hogged the limelight.

The award function was followed by well-rendered dance performance by Shobana Balachandra, on Mira's love for Lord Krishna. The nattuvangam by Smt. Neela Sukanya, vocal by Kalaimamani Radha Badri, costume and make-up by Sethu Madhavan, Mridangam by G.Vijayaraghavan, violin by T. K. Padmanabhan and flute by Shri Shashidhar were indeed commendable.

□



HAPPENINGS AT THE VIDYALAYA

by Nalini Dinesh

It has been a very eventful quarter, especially with the revival of the Talent Exposure Concerts. As the name suggests, these concerts offer a platform to students of the Vidyalaya for myriad reasons: to encourage their efforts, enable them to gain practical experience for future performances, help them overcome stage fright, train them in singing with percussion and accompanying instruments and drawing up a suitable programme of items, to create a healthy, competitive atmosphere for both students and teachers, and to help them stay focused. These concerts have been revived with the initiative taken by our Director, Smt Radha Nambodiri, after a long gap of five years, and fittingly, named S.Seshadri Memorial Talent Exposure Concerts, since Seshadri Mama's pet subject was their revival.

S. Seshadri Memorial Talent Exposure Concerts

The maiden concert was Mast. Aditya

Madhavan's on 14th July, 2007, and an excellent start it was too. With flawless kriti rendition, kalpana swaram and good raga alapana, Aditya certainly has great performing potential. Starting with the evergreen Bhairavi varnam Viribhoni, Aditya elaborated both Hindolam (for the Dikshitar vilamba kaala kriti Neerajaakshi, with kalpana swaram), and Poorvikalyani (for the rare Shyaama Shastri kriti in Tamil Enneramum Un Naamam with kalpana swaram in the challenging Misra Chaapu taalam).

Pushpa and Kaveri Anantharaman sang in the seniors' slot on the same day. Theirs was a neat presentation sans errors. Each of the duo took turns in the Latangi raga alapana. and followed it up with the Papanasam Sivan kriti Venkataramana and kalpana swaram for the same. The tillana in Brindavani was very well sung by the duo and the Purandara Dasa Madhyamavati mangalam was a good change.

Ms. Aruna D and Mr. Aditya Rajagopalan provided good support on the violin and mridangam respectively. Special mention must be made of Aditya Rajagopalan who made his mridangam literally sing the Bhairavi varnam with Aditya Madhavan, and so closely shadowed the neraval and kalpana swaram of Pushpa and Kaveri, that it became one with the singing. His experience as a vocalist has obviously



honed his skills as a percussive accompanist.

The second talent exposure concert, the vocal recitals of Kum Krittika Ranganathan and Ms Abarna Balan, were held on 21st July, 2007. They were given good support on the violin and mridangam by Mast Tejasvi V, and Mast Rohit Prasad respectively. Young Krittika sang the Kamboji Ata Tala varnam Sarasijanabha and the Arabhi pancharatna kriti Sadhinchene with good bhava, which is no mean achievement. Kalpana swaram for the Shankarabharanam kriti Rama Ramana Ra Ra was handled with great aplomb. Krittika would do well to focus more on raga alapana, by practicing the fundamental exercises, try to build more phrases, and listen to the great masters singing the same raga.

Ms. Abarna Balan, 11 year KVC student sang serenely, with a smile on her face. Relaxing is the first step towards giving one's best on stage. Once this is achieved, the rest would follow naturally, as was proved with Abarna's performance. The popular Sri Ranjani kriti Gajavadana with kalpana swaram was followed by the brisk Vasanta Swati Tirunal kriti Parama Purusha. Raga Alapana, neraval and swara prastaram were reserved for Kamakshi in Simhendramadhyamam.

Shri Sury, convener of the Vidyalaya had the last word when he said these talent exposure concerts were stepping stones to the talent promotion concerts. What

better encouragement could the students get?

Kum. Ananya Shankar, 5th year student commenced the third talent exposure concert on 4th Aug 2007, with Smt Parvati Shankarnarayanan KVC diploma 11 year student in the seniors' slot. The point made above about nerves worked the opposite way for Ananya! Blessed with a good voice, capable of good gamakas, and good innovation on swaras, it was nerves that marred an otherwise good effort. Starting with the Gambheera Naattai Ata Thala varnam of Sri Panchapakesa Iyer, Rangotthunga, she elaborated on Mohanam with alapana and kalpana swaram for the kriti Sadaa Paalaya. Dedicated and consistent practice will pay rich dividends for this promising student. She should also pay attention to smaller details, like pronouncing the composer's name correctly.

Smt. Parvati Shankarnarayanan began with the popular Hamsadhwani kriti Vinayaka Ninnu Vina, with kalpana swaram and took up Pantuvaraali as the main raga, for the beautiful and not so common GNB kriti Shivananda. Parvati has a good voice well suited to classical music. More focused and intense practice of swara prastara would add much to Parvati's quality of music.

Both singers were accompanied by Shri Karthik Ramaswamy on violin and Shri Vinod Ramaswamy on the mridangam.

September's talent exposure concert had VI year student Kum Anuradha Rao, singing a complete suite of alapana, neraval and kalpana swaram for the Navaratri kriti Saroruhasana Jaaye. Her performance was a credit to herself and her teacher for, manodharma sangeetham is the more intangible and elusive aspect of our classical music, which, as Dr. R. Vedavalli said once is like the growth of a plant, you cannot see it grow, as you look at it day by day, but is nonetheless bigger when you suddenly look at it after a fortnight or month. Consistent watering (practice), manuring (listening to good music) and good sunlight (the guru's teaching) ensure beautiful blooms – students can take this as gospel.

Smt. Praveena Gautaman KVC II year student, is standing proof of the above theory – she seems to have been following the Kaizan principle of continual improvement and there could have been no better tribute for her guru's efforts than her performance that day (in the very own words of her guru). Kalyani was the raga chosen for alapana, followed by the Swati Tirunal kriti Pankaja Lochana, with trikala neraval and kalpana swaram.

Shri. Anandnarayan (Prakash) supported the vocal artistes on the violin and Mast. Sriram Rajan handled the percussion on the mridangam

Lecture Demonstration on Voice Culture on 10 Aug 2007

Dr. (Prof) T. Unnikrishnan, Dean Music

faculty, Indira Kala Sangit University, Kharagarh, Chattisgarh gave a lecture demonstration on topics of immense interest & practical application, to the vocal faculty of our Vidyalaya - on Voice Culture, Voice Therapy and Voice Production Techniques for the singers of Carnatic classical, Hindustani classical and light music.

The main topics he discussed were voice problems and voice production.

Voice problems were categorized into functional disorder (physiological or genetic) and voice abuse (constantly speaking or singing in a noisy environment).

He next discussed good voice production. This involves

- Control of larynx - different tones are produced depending on the position of the voice box and results in "chest voice" and "head voice". Carnatic singers use chest voice, Hindustani singers use combination of chest and head voice and light/devotional singers use mostly head voice.
- Breath Control - Breath is the fuel of the voice. There are four types of breathing – neck, chest, abdominal/diaphragm and paradoxical. Diaphragmatic breathing is the healthiest and provides optimal amount of oxygen to the organs including vocal apparatus.

Vaggeyekara Celebrations

Shri. Papanasam Sivan, Oothukkaadu Venkatasubbier and Gopalakrishna Bharati Day (4 July 2007)

Master Srinath Ramkumar Warriar sang popular compositions like Sharanam Ayyappa in Mukhari, Sabhapatiku in Abhogi and Alaypayuthe in Kaanadaa. His gamakas were clear and pleasant to hear, and the renditions had imaginative endings. Endings of a kriti after the pallavi, anupallavi and charanam, incidentally are the first exposure that students have of manodharma sangeetham.

A rather diffident Abheri alapana did not prepare the listener for the bhava-laden phrases in the following Kamboji alapana in Smt Padmini Vijayaraghavan's recital. The popular composition Kaana Kan Koti of Papanasam Sivan has madhyamakala passages after anupallavi and charanam which again reminds us that some Sivan's compositions were influenced by Dikshitar's style and some by Thyagaraja's style. The recital would have had a greater impact with stronger layam.

It was clear that Sameer Subramaniam had made all the compositions he rendered his own. The concert had clear enunciation of lyrics and clear and well-rounded gamakas. A brisk start with Shree Vighnarajam Bhaje in Gambheera Nattai and 2 more racy compositions Maal Marugaa in Vasanta and Sivakama Sundari in Jaganmohini, then led to a sedate Mahalakshmi in

Sankarabharanam.

Sameer elaborated Vasanta for the Papanasam Sivan kriti "Maal Maruga" and also Kamboji raga followed by the evergreen kriti Tiruvadi Charanam.

The artistes were accompanied on the violin by Shri Satish Sheshadri and Shri R.Narayanan on the mridangam.

Muthu Thandavar, Arunachala Kavirayar and other Tamil Composers Day (18th Aug. 2007)

Smt. Sujatha Ramesh gave a good recital of well-known kritis in her dulcet voice. She rendered Konji Konji Va Guhane, a



Periyasami Thooran kriti in Khamias raagam and Yaaro Ivar Yaaro in Bhairavi evocatively and Vandu Seruvaar, a Sahana kriti by Kavi Kunjara Bharati was another excellent rendition.

The next performer for the evening was Shri Harishankar Iyer, a former KVC student of our Vidyalaya. Dayai Puriya in Malayamarutham, composed by Vedanayakam Pillai and Arul Seyya Vendum, the Koteeswara Iyer kriti in Rasikapriya raagam were rendered very well. Lathangi and Reetigowlai were expanded on competently.

Lakshmi Krishnamurthy's rendition of the Tamil compositions took the listeners back to the golden era of MK Tyagaraja Bhagavata, KB Sundarambal, Dandapani Desikar (who happens to be one of Lakshmi's gurus at the Annamalai University) et al. With a majestic voice and throw, perfectly aligned to shruti and clarity of brighas and gamakas, Lakshmi cast a spell on the audience. Her recital that day, proved that kriti rendition is an art by itself and requires time and experience to mature, just as manodharma sangeetam. Lakshmi's recital commenced with a Dandapani Desikar composition in Devamanohari Aanai Mukhatton, included

Pongu Tamarai in Simhendra mandhyamam of Periya Sami Thooran, Addikkondar in Mayamalavagowlai of Muthu Tandavar, and ended with a Ponnaiah Pillai tillana in Bilahari.

Sri Vishwanath Ramaswamy accompanied the artistes for the evening on the violin, and Shri Karthik Ramaswamy provided mridangam support.

Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar & Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkande Day (22 Sept 2007)

Yogesh G. Hunswadkar trained in the style of the Mewati gharana presented a Hindustani vocal recital on this occasion. He was accompanied on the tabla by Shri Sudhir Shingade and Shri Vasudev Rizbud on the harmonium.

The performance began with Raag Puriya Dhanashree. A khayal and a drut bandish were presented. This was followed by a bandish in Raga Haunsdhwani. An interesting & rare composition in a Raga Charaju ki Malhar followed to mark the monsoons. In a tribute to the legend Pt. Paluskar, a well known bandish in Rag Kamod was presented. The rendition concluded with Raag Bhairavi. □